

If You Live in Lion Country

Make your property safer for humans and less friendly to lions by taking the following precautions. Encourage your neighbors to do the same.

- **Make noise when you're outside.** Make noise during the times when lions are most active, dusk to dawn.
- **Install outside lighting.** Lighting will allow you to see if a lion is present.
- **Supervise children.** Closely supervise children whenever they play outdoors and keep them inside from dusk to dawn. Teach children about lions and what to do if they see one nearby.
- **Trim landscaping.** Trim or remove vegetation to eliminate hiding places for lions, especially around children's play areas. Make it difficult for lions to approach unseen.
- **Do not feed wildlife.** Feeding deer, raccoons and other wildlife can also attract mountain lions. Store garbage securely. Plant shrubs that deer don't like to eat, which will discourage concentrations of the lion's chief prey. Contact the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Service for the publication *Deer and Rabbit Resistant Plants*.
- **Control pets.** Roaming pets are easy prey and can attract lions. Bring pets in at night. If you leave your pet outside, keep it in a kennel with a secured top. Don't leave pet food or water outside, which can attract prey animals.
- **Secure livestock.** Place livestock in sheds or barns at night and close doors to outbuildings.

- **Stay clear of a kill.** Lions cover their kill and come back to feed on it for two or three days following the kill. If you find what looks like a lion kill, stay clear because the lion may return.

If You Encounter a Mountain Lion

- **Hiking in lion country.** When you walk or hike in lion country, go in groups and make noise to reduce the risk of surprising a lion. Keep children close to you and within sight. Talk to them about lions and teach them what to do if they encounter one.
- **Never approach a lion.** If you come upon a lion, what appears to be a lion kill or see lion kittens, be alert and move away from the area. Most mountain lions will try to avoid a confrontation; give them a way to escape.
- **Do not run from a lion.** If a lion confronts you, do not run—it may trigger the animal's instinct to chase and attack. Instead, face the lion, stand upright and back away slowly. Pick up small children so they won't run.
- **Appear larger.** Raise or wave your arms slowly and speak firmly to the animal. Open your jacket if you are wearing one. If the lion behaves aggressively, throw objects at it. You want to convince the lion that you are not its prey and that you are dangerous.
- **If attacked, fight back.** Mountain lions are sometimes driven away by prey animals that fight back. Humans have fought off lions successfully with rocks, sticks, caps and jackets, garden tools and even their bare hands.

To report a mountain lion sighting, encounter, or attack call the Arizona Game and Fish Department at (602) 942-3000 during business hours. In an emergency, dial 911.



azgfd.com

Arizona Game and Fish Department
 2221 W. Greenway Road
 Phoenix, AZ 85023
 (602) 942-3000

The Arizona Game and Fish Department prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability in its programs and activities. If anyone believes they have been discriminated against in any of the AGFD's programs or activities, including its employment practices, the individual may file a complaint alleging discrimination directly with the AGFD Deputy Director, 2221 W. Greenway Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85023, (602) 942-3000 or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4040 N. Fairfax Dr., Suite 130, Arlington, VA 22203. If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact the AGFD Deputy Director as listed above or by calling TTY at (800) 367-8939.

June 2004

Mountain Lions in Arizona

What you need to know



ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

Mountain Lions

Mountain lions—also known as cougars, panthers and pumas—live only in the Western Hemisphere, ranging from British



Columbia to South America. They inhabit all portions of Arizona except the extreme southwest corner of the state. They are powerful predators that

prey on deer, elk and other wildlife and play a role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

Human encroachment into traditional lion habitat has increased the likelihood and potential severity of human-mountain lion conflicts in urban settings. Human behaviors such as feeding animals that mountain lions prey upon also set a stage for conflict; feeding increases densities of prey animals, which in turn attracts predators such as mountain lions.

Generally, lions are quiet and elusive. They tend to live in remote areas with plentiful



Photographs by AnnaLaura Averill-Murray.

deer and adequate cover. As human development increases, lions may become more accustomed to humans in and around their habitat.

The size of a mountain lion's home range depends on terrain and the amount of food avail-

able. Males mark the boundaries of their home range with piles of dirt and twigs, called scrapes, to signal to other lions that the area is occupied. Lions will defend their territories, killing other lions that attempt to occupy the same area—one reason that relocation of lions rarely succeeds.

People rarely get more than a glimpse of a mountain lion in the wild because lions usually prefer to avoid people. Although the chance of encountering a mountain lion is rare, it is possible—especially if you are out between dusk and dawn. Statistics

show that attacks on humans are more likely to be made by young lions, perhaps because they are not yet living in established ranges and may target what looks like easier prey, including pets—and even small children.

Mountain Lion Management

Mountain lions in Arizona are classified as a big game species, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department manages them as a renewable natural resource. The state's current mountain lion population is estimated at 2,500 to 3,000. Since 1999, the department has distributed an average of 6,900 hunting

permits per year with an average annual harvest of 335 lions. The department's mandatory checkout process for successful hunters allows biologists to gather and analyze information on lions including age, gender and kill location.



Mountain lions are top-level predators capable of killing or seriously injuring humans, and the department is committed to public education to help people learn how to behave responsibly and live safely in proximity to lions.


If people are regularly seeing lions in a particular area, it may mean that the lions have become habituated to humans and have lost their fear, a situation that represents a public safety risk. Occasionally, when necessary, the department will kill individual lions that pose a threat to public safety.

TRACKS OF A LION

In an unhurried walk, lions usually place the hind paw in the imprint made by the front paw. They have four toes with three distinct lobes at the base of the pad, resulting in a distinctive M shape. Generally, claw marks are not visible since their claws are retractable.

Dog or coyote tracks may be similar in size, but will usually have obvious claw marks. Most lion tracks are only 3 to 3.5 inches wide while a large dog makes a track greater than 4 inches. Dog tracks usually have only two distinct lobes at the base of the pad.

Left front foot



Left hind foot

